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The Pine Torch Vol. 22 No. 6

Piney Woods School

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THE PINE TORCH

HE CRUSADED FOR EDUCATION

BY JOE S. COHEN

Fifty years ago, few people believed every child in the Mississippi backwoods was entitled to a real education . . . especially in the poor-land regions. Wealth was measured by horses. If you had two, you were well-to-do. The poor had one, a mule, a donkey . . . or an ox.

Laurence C. Jones has changed all this. A humble colored man, he came into the area around Braxton, Mississippi in 1909.



He had no money, knew nothing about the region or no one in Braxton. But he had desire. He wanted to start a school for those of his race who had the least.

He was a crusader from Iowa . . . for education. No one asked why a graduate of the University of Iowa would come to backwoods Mississippi to teach readin' and writin'. **Not too many cared.** But he cared. He was young and he had a dream that had to materialize.

He put together a few acres of poor land, a tumbledown cabin and began teaching all who wanted to learn to read and write.

Laurence Jones, by his very day-to-day philosophy, convinced all that there is a way of life far better than the one identified with the environment inherited by the persons he was willing and able to serve.

His struggle over the past 50 years has been told often. He has had national recognition. Today, his Piney Woods School has fairly adequate classrooms, dormitories and shops. These are important.

But of much greater significance is that his influence and hard-working example have changed the entire attitude of the region in which he works.

Now, children are getting an education. Ignorance is not glorified, as it once was. Tractors have replaced oxen and dairy cows are scientifically pampered, not permitted to wander the open fields for "catch-as-catch-can" milking when available or convenient.

Today, a college education is a goal for the sons and grandsons of the illiterate children Laurence Jones found near Braxton 50 years ago. He has erased forever the "im"—from im—possible.



"What is education, or civilization itself for that matter, but a form of saving? We harvest and keep the best of the world's ideas and inventions so that we may pass them along to the generations that follow."

Laurence Jones

"Light where there was darkness . . ."

Vol. XXII

April, May, June, 1960

No. 6

*The Trustees, Faculty and
Graduating Class of 1960 extend to you
this invitation to*

Commencement

Monday, May 30, 1960

at 5:00 p. m. in our

Rock Garden Amphitheater

*You'll see a Commencement
that is different*

*The students do the skills they have learned
by doing them on the stage for their
graduation exercises*

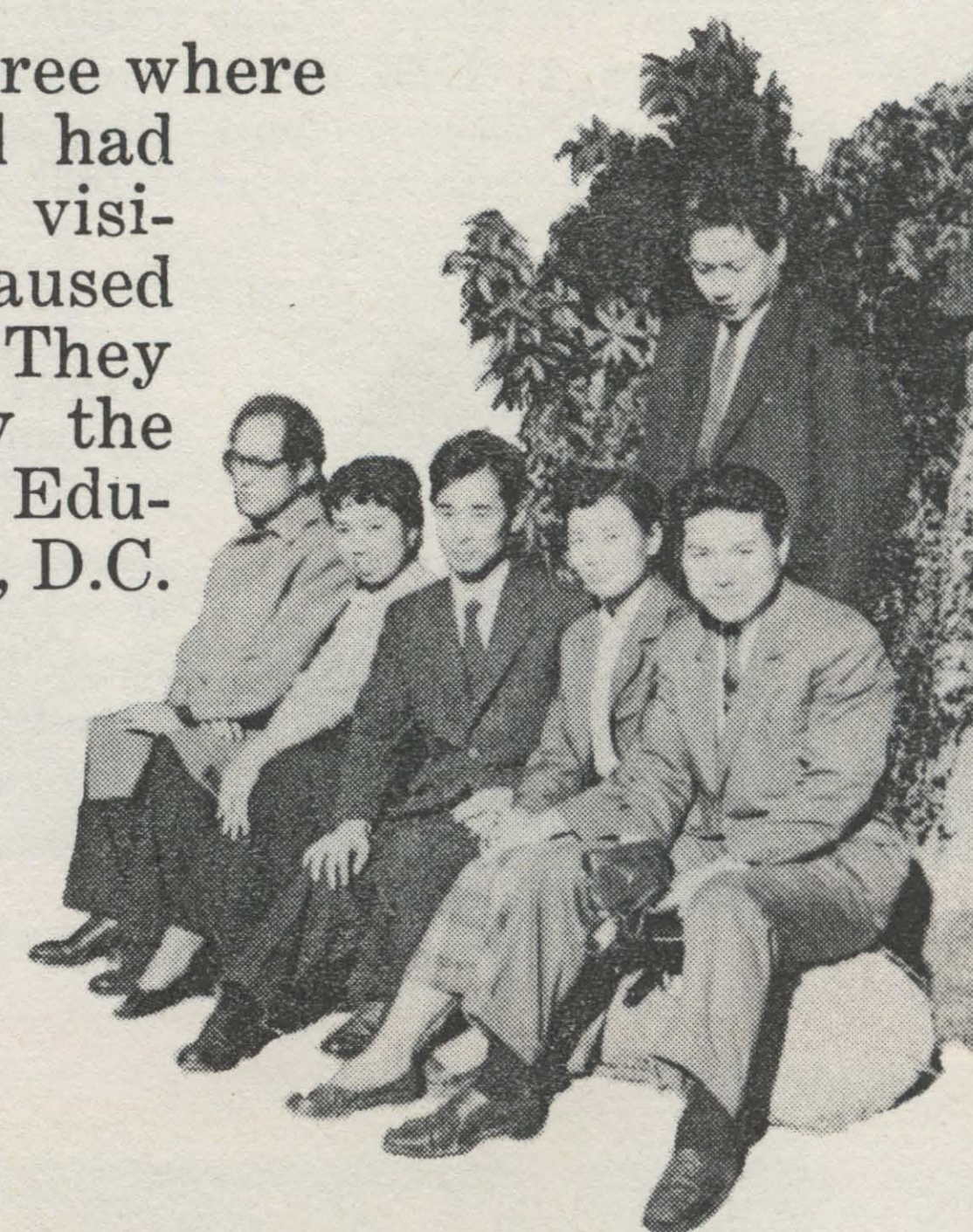
*Laurence C. Jones
president*

*Singleton Bender
associate president*

Dr. L. E. E. Chandler

Visitors from Tokyo, Japan

Down at the Cedar Tree where Piney Woods School had its beginning, these visitors from Tokyo paused during a recent visit. They were sent to us by the American Council on Education in Washington, D.C. We were happy to welcome Kazuko Yamakawa, Toshi Takahashi, Ichio Kumagai, Takashi Kodama, Saburo Ozawa and Takao Akiyama.



LIGHT WHERE THERE WAS DARKNESS



SEE HOW FAR OUR TORCH THROWS ITS BEAM...



"What is education, or civilization itself for that matter, but a form of saving? We harvest and keep the best of the world's ideas and inventions so that we may pass them along to the generations that follow."



A MEDICAL DOCTOR—From his humble beginning at Piney Woods in 1934, Jasper E. McLaurin, M. D., has made great progress. After growing up in Piney Woods School he then attended school in New Orleans, Louisiana. Following jet-pilot service in the Navy, he attended Wayne University, Detroit, Michigan, received his medical degree from Meharry Medical College, Nashville, and joined the staff of Mt. Carmel Mercy Hospital, Detroit. He was the first Negro M. D. at that hospital, where 99 percent of all patients are white. He is now at Harvard Medical Center, Massachusetts for training in neurology.



SANATORIUM SUPERVISOR—Mary McReynolds, registered nurse, a Piney Woods graduate, is in charge of the Colored Department of the Mississippi Tuberculosis Sanatorium. She has 65 employees under her supervision, including five registered nurses, ten practical nurses and fifty nurses' aides. Miss McReynolds has aided in the discharge of more than 2,000 patients since she started work at a time when the bed capacity was only 40, compared with today's 204.



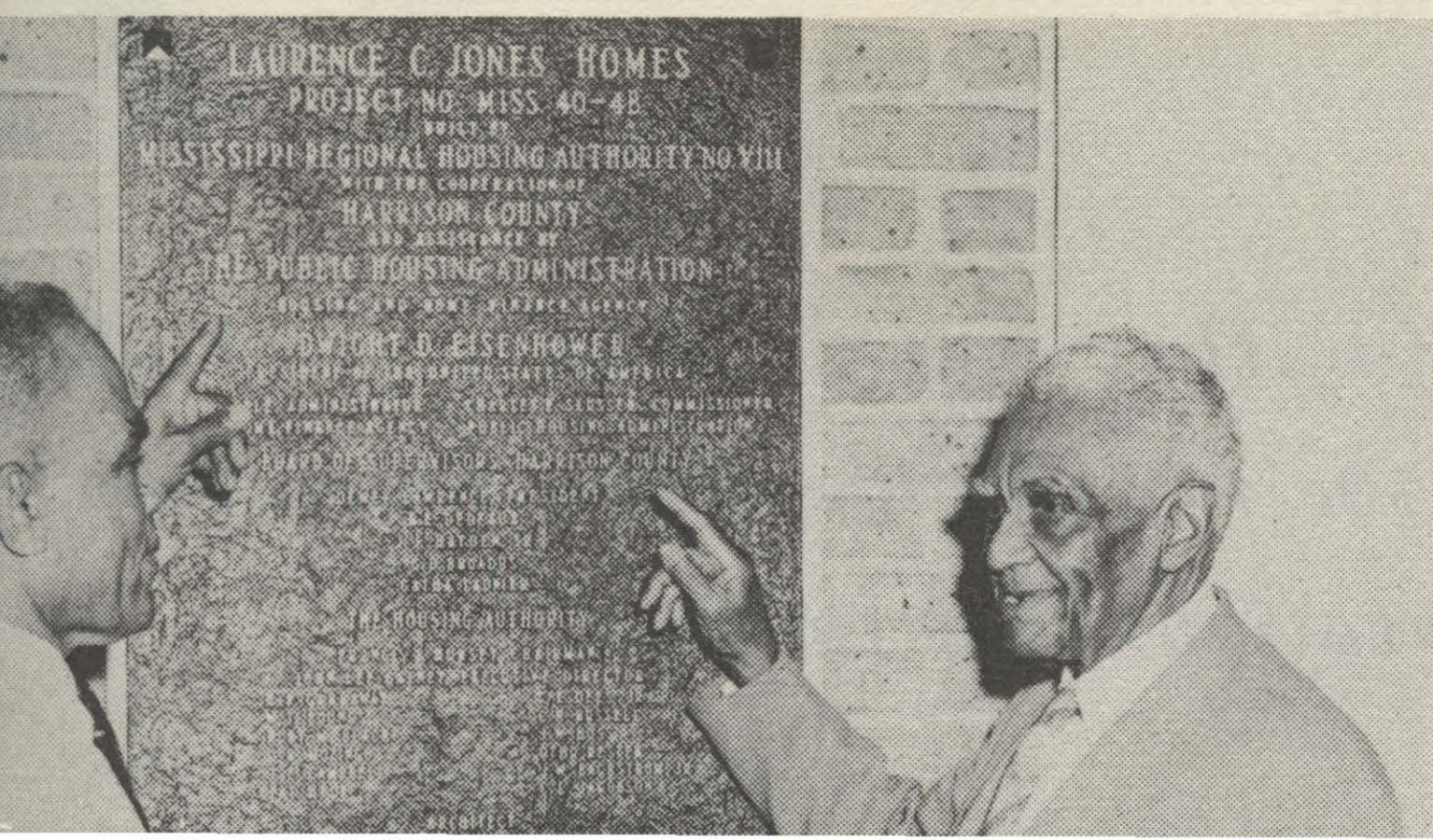
A COLLEGE PROFESSOR—From Collins, Mississippi, William McIntosh came to Piney Woods, via Covington County Training School, Mississippi to establish a brilliant academic record. He was valedictorian at Collins Junior High in 1936, won the same honor at Covington in 1938 and two years later repeated for the title at Piney Woods. Now, 18 years later, with a doctorate in philosophy, Dr. McIntosh is head of the Social Science Department at Grambling, Louisiana, a position he has held since 1954 after U. S. Army service, graduation from the University of Minnesota and five years as director of the Political Science Department of Tennessee A & I University in Nashville.



COUNTY SCHOOL SUPERVISOR—A true disciple of Dr. Jones is Bettye Mae Jack, who is supervisor of the county school system in Scott County, with headquarters in Forest, Mississippi. In carrying out the Piney Woods tradition, she is the head of a system that numbers 23 high school teachers, 38 elementary instructors and more than 2,200 students. Miss Jack has translated the Piney Woods philosophy into practicality that defies successful description.



FIRST NEGRO WOMAN BROADCASTER—Willa Monroe, known to millions through her popular radio program on WDIA in Memphis, Tennessee, is the first Negro woman arranging her own airwave show in the country. A Piney Woods product, she has interviewed more than 1,000 people on her "Tan Town Homemaker" show. Bert Ferguson, executive vice president of WDIA, summed it up beautifully and accurately, when he said: "Few Negro women . . . have wielded so much influence upon the lives of so many people as has Willa Monroe . . ."



Recognition for Dr. Laurence C. Jones' efforts came when a 124-unit public housing project was dedicated at North Gulfport, Mississippi. The Piney Woods School founder and president cited the project as "A sign to our people" of man's goodness.

A letter we're proud of...

SUBJECT:

James D. Kelly . . . the kind of man Piney Woods develops.

TO:

Commander, 6431st Operations Sqdn.

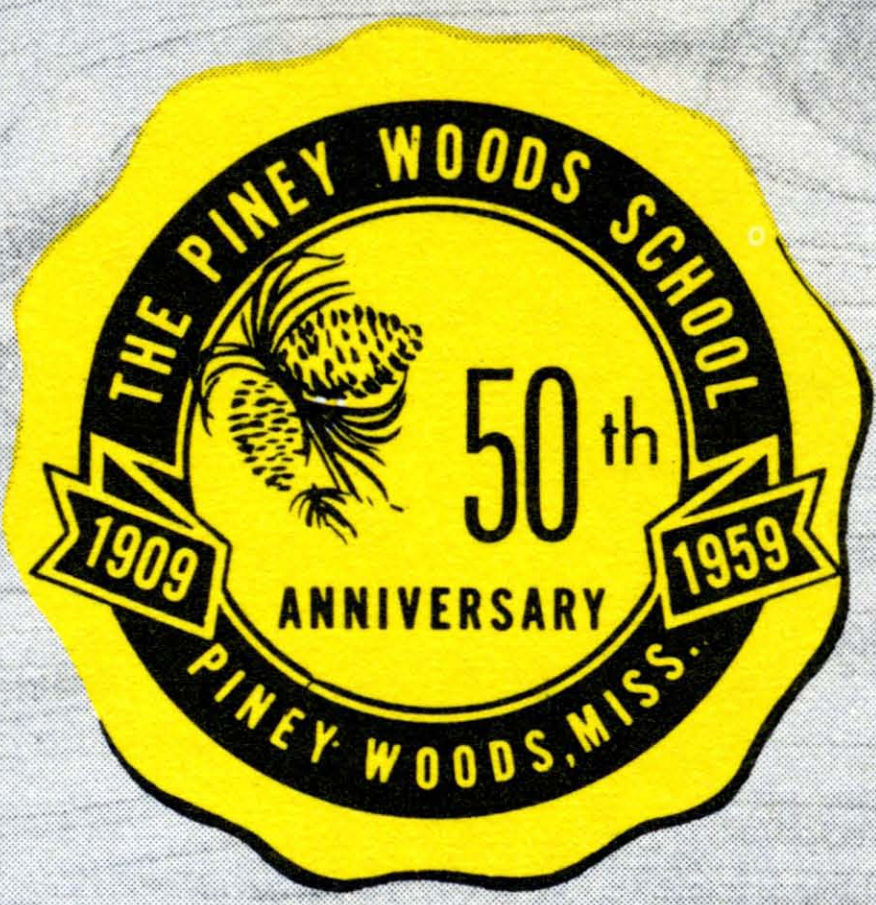
FROM:

Supply Officer, 6431st Ops Ron

1. T/Sgt. James D. Kelly was assigned to this unit 30 Nov. 1958. His daily military conduct and duty activities have been . . . highly recognized through efficient capabilities of many outstanding duties . . .
2. Sgt. Kelly . . . has cooperated in an excellent manner regarding any task to which he was assigned. On many occasions he has exerted self-initiative in getting a job done . . . without having to be advised by his superior officer.
3. He is always punctual and has never complained when asked . . . to contribute a few hours' overtime to accomplish tasks which could not be completed during regular hours.
4. He has demonstrated . . . excellent leadership, outstanding supervision . . . and supply discipline.
5. He has shown high regard for and due respect toward his superior officers. His military courtesy and personal appearance are outstanding.
6. Sgt. Kelly is a credit to this organization and to the U. S. Air Force. Because of his knowledge, combined with enthusiastic and tireless application . . . a rating of "Superior" was proudly received by this organization from . . . inspectors during their tour last month.
7. I recommend him worthy to be chosen, with your approval, as one of the most "outstanding" noncommissioned officers in your squadron, and "Meritorious of Commendation."

HOWARD P. PURCELL
Capt. USAF
Supply Officer

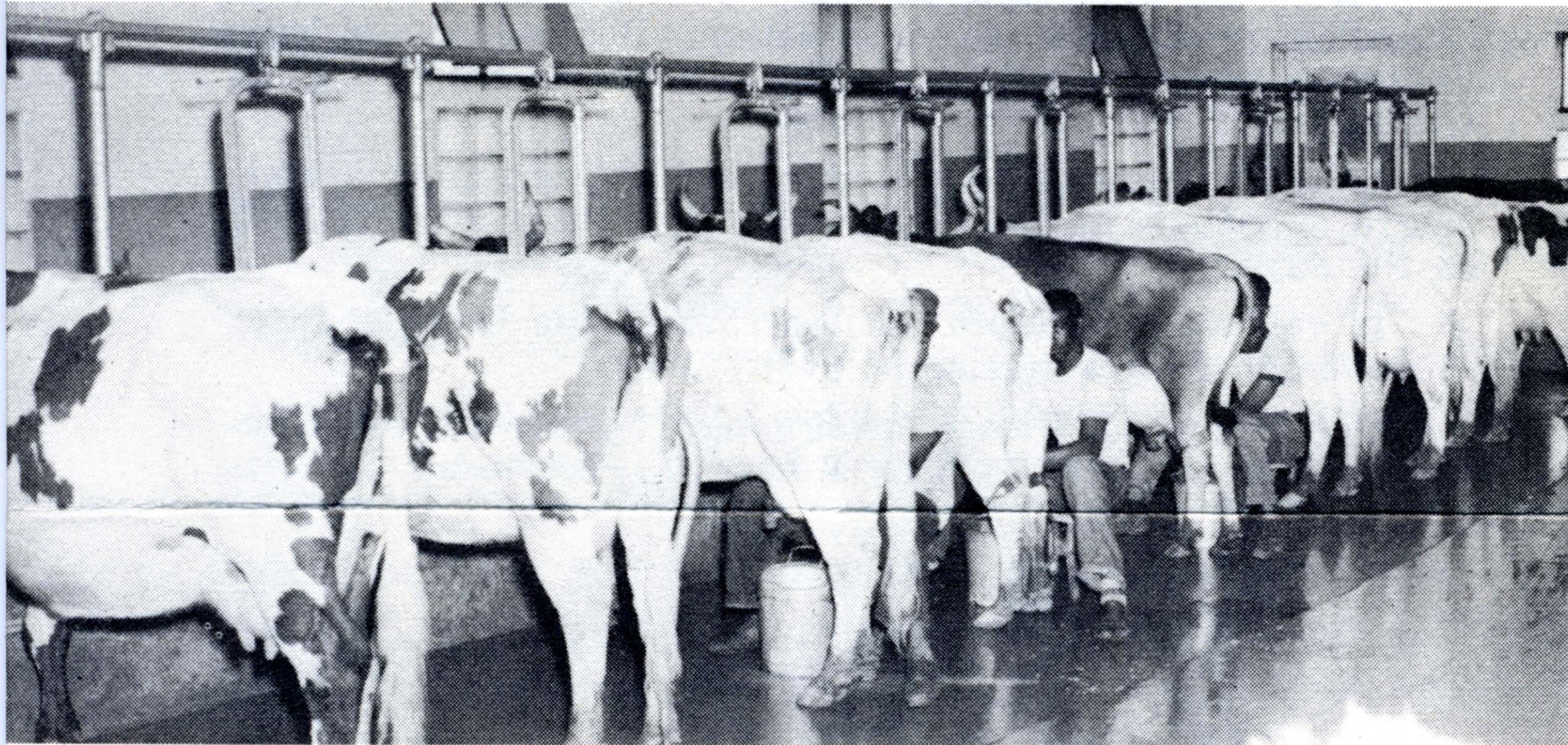
"James D. Kelly is the kind of man Piney Woods develops"



Training hands to be skillful...

“I must have been quite young when I first heard it, for the quaint, old-fashioned phrase runs through all my childhood memories with the persistence of a familiar tune: “Willful waste makes woeful want, and you may live to see the day when you will say ‘Oh, how I wish I had the bread that once I threw away’.”

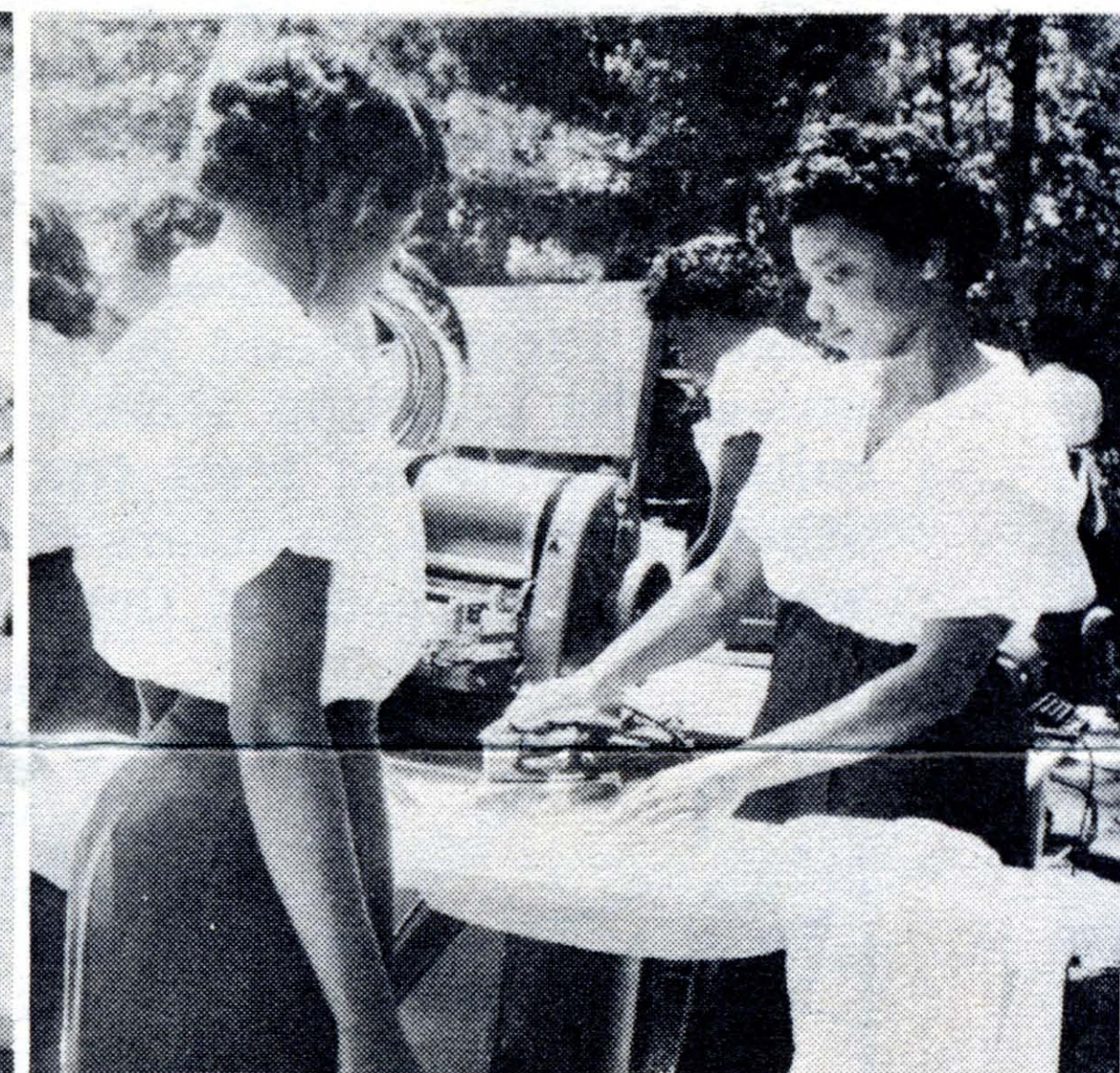
“My job in life has been to try to save human beings from the willful waste of ignorance and despair, and to help them take their places as competent citizens . . . It is a task that I would choose again, if I were young. It was motivated by these words which I share with you. I can vouch for the rewards they will bring.”



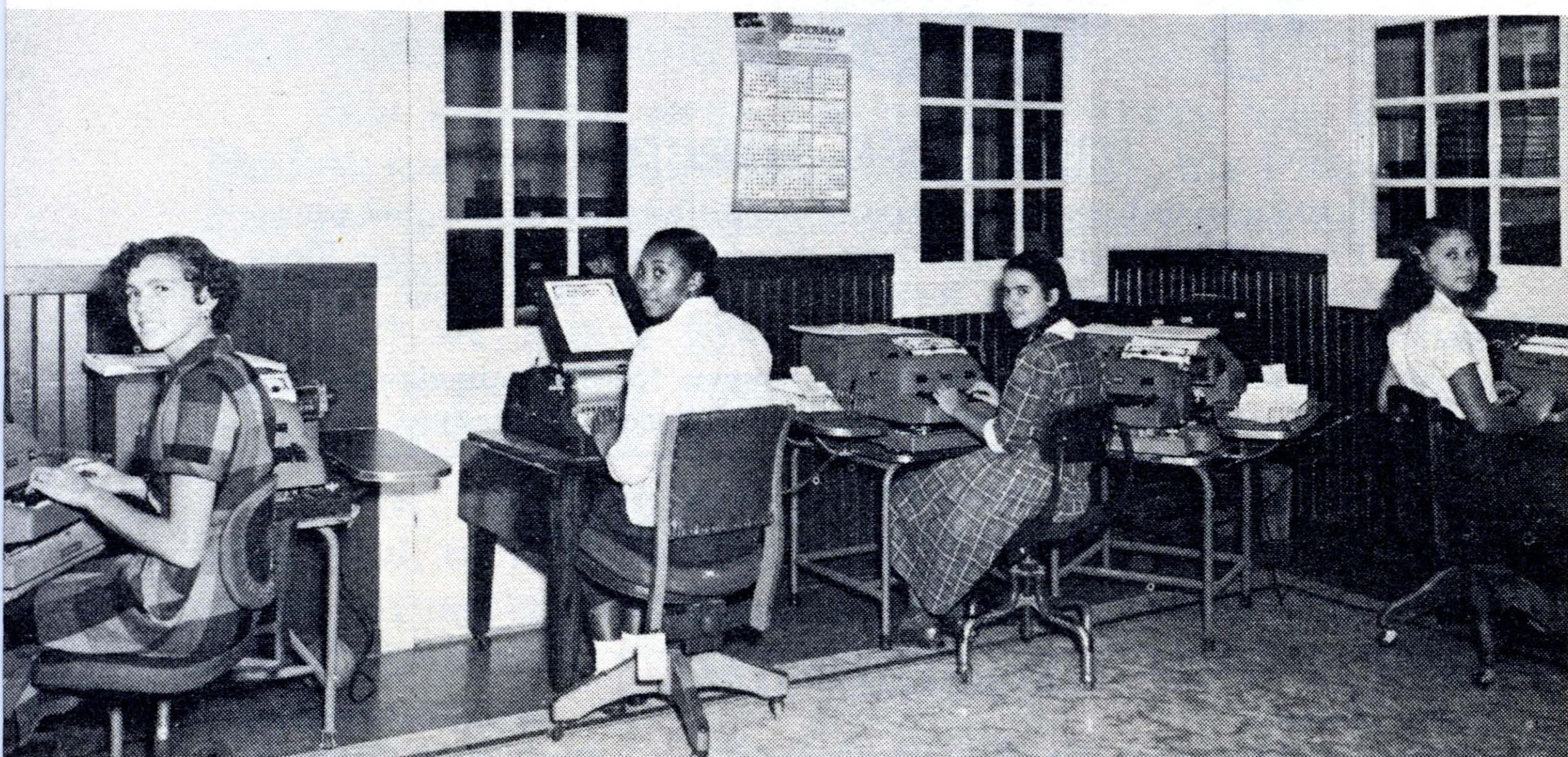
▲ A far cry from the old days is Piney Woods' modern dairy facilities.



▲ Sewing and Ironing



Housekeeping, like everything else, is up-to-date because we use the latest tools available.

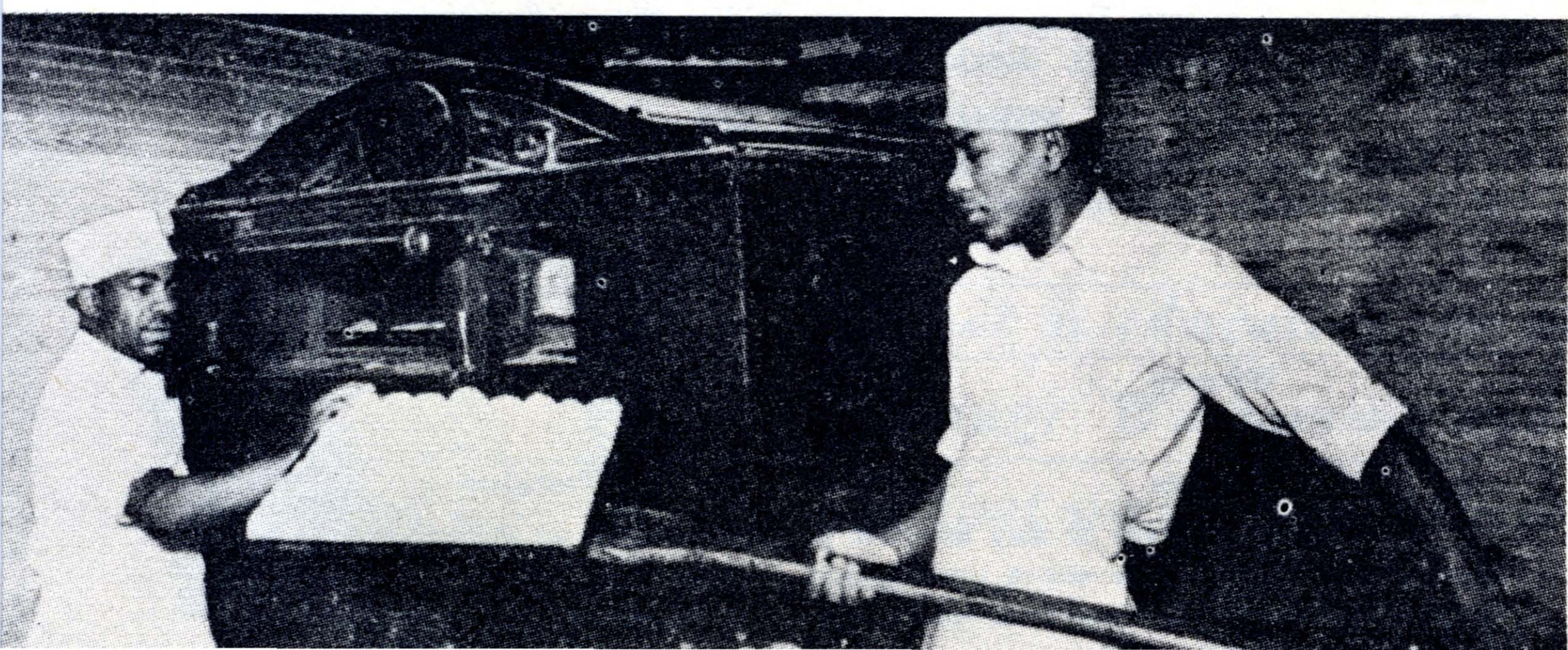


▲ Typing is fun ... and practical. Baking isn't overlooked either! ▼



Obviously, everyone wants to learn. ▲

Young printers at work. ▼



Some fruits of your dollars

BY DORIS JAMES



Several years ago, the mother of six children and step-mother of three others was dying. She placed her newest born in the arms of the oldest stepdaughter and asked simply: "Raise it as your own."

The father had a little education and tried hard to grow enough crops to feed his family. His main interest, however, was in religion and he yearned to be a preacher.

The family . . . let's call it the X family . . . desperately needed help, which came from a distant cousin, the bookkeeper at Piney Woods School. He moved the entire family to a patch of ground with a small house near our school, because he was determined that the children should have a chance for education. The land wasn't good. It had a few places level enough for cultivating, which was done with a mule, an eight-inch plow and hoes. All of them worked the land and they had a home.

Walking the two-and-one-half miles daily, the children came to Piney Woods. Many times they were without lunch, unless the boarding students would quietly give them biscuits or cornbread from their own meals. Despite these and other handicaps, members of the X family made good grades, were near the head of their classes.

The oldest, and essentially the head of the family, and we'll call her "F," was salutatorian of her class, despite poor eyesight that caused her to use a magnifying glass for most of her studying. Heartbreakingly, she was stricken with tuberculosis a few weeks after her graduation. T. B. in our woods was almost equivalent to early death.

Providence and Piney Woods friends determined she would not die . . . and that her younger brothers and sisters would not be exposed to the dreaded disease. She was isolated, given the best care possible at home, but neither was enough. She was losing the fight.

After a long struggle, "F" was finally admitted to the State Sanatorium, where she stayed for three years until entirely cured. A Piney Woods graduate, incidentally, was supervisor of nurses at the sanatorium, where "F" was restored to health.

Meanwhile, one by one, the other eight were attending Piney Woods and they have been graduating and moving on to Jackson, where college is available. Daddy had died, so they were on their own. But as the older ones graduated and were able to earn their own way, most of them as rural teachers, the younger ones entered school and were educated. One is an expert carpenter, another learned mechanics in a garage and at

night school. A third is a social worker. Still another is a postal clerk in Chicago.

ALL MEMBERS OF THE "X" FAMILY ARE COLLEGE GRADUATES!

Those not otherwise employed are all teachers in Mississippi!

Thus, dear readers, who sent us dollars for just such purposes, you can see the fruits of your generosity. Your gifts have paid off handsomely and will continue to do so!

Dr. Jones says:

"I just kept on praying as if everything depended on God, and kept on working as if everything depended on me. You can't get discouraged if you do that."

Coming to see Piney Woods School?

From any direction in the United States, except Gulfport or Mobile, by air, auto, bus or train, you first must come to Jackson, Mississippi. Out of Jackson on Highway 80, you come down Highway 49 south, as if you were starting to Hattiesburg or Gulfport. Twenty-two miles out of Jackson on Highway 49 you'll pass a long white board fence paralleling the highway (our pasture fence).

You'll see "Piney Woods" school signs. Follow them. When you reach the school, register at the sign that says: VISITORS, WELCOME!

From then on, you're our guest. We'll furnish the guide, who will take you to the log cabin and cedar tree, where the school began. You'll see the mess hall, classrooms, assembly hall, library, the dairy, livestock and farm operations and the industries . . . printing, dry cleaning, carpentry shop, sewing room and laundry—as well as all academic facilities.

Mrs. Eula Kelly Moman will be your hostess. Dr. Z. E. E. Chandler is director of instruction. Professor Singleton Bender is associate president. The secretaries are Mrs. C. E. Dishman and Miss Doris Grisham.

Other features of your visit. Overnight accommodations; Negro spirituals at the noon meal; Spirituals at 5:30 P.M. on Sundays.

If you wish, you can see the film, "This Is Your Life" . . . ask Mr. Phifer, assistant postmaster.

One last word: Please, no tipping. If you wish, contributions will be accepted by Mrs. Moman. . . . *Laurence C. Jones*



THE PINE TORCH

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Official Publication of
PINEY WOODS COUNTRY LIFE SCHOOL
Founded by
LAURENCE C. JONES

EDITORIAL BOARD
Bertha Dishman
Carrie S. Crofton
Dr. Z. E. E. Chandler
Singleton Bender
Doris Marie Grisham

BEQUEST
Our friends are requested to give the school some aid in the way of testamentary bequests. Its corporate name is The Piney Woods School, and Piney Woods, Mississippi, should be added in specification of the place.

FORM OF BEQUEST
I hereby give and bequeath to "The Piney Woods Country Life School" of Piney Woods, State of Mississippi, the sum and amount of:

----- Dollars

----- Witness -----

----- Witness -----
----- Testator -----

If a house or farm or any specific property; such as stocks, shares or bonds, etc. is given, a short description of the same should be inserted instead of the words "the sum and amount of Dollars."